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1 Introduction

The *Manières de langage* are a group of late-medieval dialogues that were used to teach and learn French in England. The 'death date' of Anglo Norman has been subject of much debate, with one tradition of scholarship advancing the view that Anglo Norman was no more than an artificially-maintained written code by the 13th century (Rothwell 1968), while another tradition posits that Anglo Norman existed as a living language into the 14th century (see Ingham [2015] for overview). However, it is maintained that at the time of the *Manières*, the late 14th and early 15th centuries, French was an instructed L2 (Lusignan 2004; Ingham 2015). French would have been a useful language to learn for purposes both domestic and abroad. On the one hand, the 14th century saw an influx of French speakers into Britain: merchants, travellers, and agricultural labourers (Butterfield 2009, Critten 2018a). On the other hand, the *Manières* may have equally sought to promote a population of French-speaking British people to consolidate newly-won lands during the Hundred Years War (Critten 2015). One group of learners is likely to have been young men who saw acquisition of French as professionally advantageous, although codicological and in-text evidence does not rule out other groups.[1] Indeed, in an extract of the dialogues, we see a child reciting his word lists learned at *l'ostelle de William Kyngesmylle Escriven* [the hostel of scrivener William Kingsmill], a teacher of French in Oxford (*Manières*: 76).[2] In fact, the *Manières* are largely associated with a group of Oxford teachers who operated schools tangential to the University, instructing a comprehensive syllabus of French for largely business purposes (Kibbee 1990: 74-85). This syllabus included grammars, model letters, orthographical treatises, and *nominalia* (word lists), alongside the *Manières*. The 11 manuscripts within which the dialogues may be found each contain collections of conversations, and often contain the aforementioned extra pedagogical material; thus they could be compared to modern-day language textbooks (Lusignan 1987: 98). These dialogues are traditionally grouped into three "families" (1396, 1399, and 1415) following revisions around the turn of the fifteenth century.

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[1] For example, an extract from the dialogues is preserved in the formulary of Archbishop John Kemp, and not a compendium of pedagogical treatises (as is the standard for the *Manières* fragments).

[2] All translations my own unless otherwise stated. Citations from the *Manières* are taken from Kristol's edition (1995).

The lively conversations of the *Manières* demonstrate how to greet people of varying social ranks, book a room in a hostel, ask for directions, how to insult, argue and flirt. As such, these dialogues are a valuable source for pragmatic analysis. Scholars have already begun to conduct such analysis on the *Manières*: Kristol (1992) examines the characterisation of orality through interjections; Denoyelle (2013) explores the range of directive speech acts in the dialogues; and Lagorgette (2013) discusses the various insults of the *Manières*, with attention to the range of lexical choice compared with farces and *fabliaux*. Culpeper and Kytö (2010: 13) conceptualise such conversation manuals as "speech-purposed" texts, since the speech represented in the dialogues attempts to mimic spoken interaction. However, in his work on multilingual conversation manuals of the Early Modern period, Gallagher (2014: 27) prefers the term "speech-directed", stating that the authors of language-learning dialogues "expected that their […] materials would make the jump from text to speech, and be used in conversation" and thus "the aim of the conversation manual was not just to represent effective speech, but to allow for its redeployment in conversation". If we apply this perspective to the earlier *Manières*, the language of the dialogues does more than merely reflect spoken French, rather, its core aim is to produce a socially acceptable spoken French. The present article will begin to answer the broader question of precisely how the *Manières* sought to achieve this goal, focussing on incongruent conversational behaviours. This concern about competence has been raised elsewhere by Kristol (2001 : 151), who asks "[d]e quelle manière […] les intellectuels, les aristocrates et les bourgeois anglais du Moyen Âge apprenaient-ils non seulement à faire des phrases convenables en français élémentaire, à un niveau de langue enseigné par les *manières de langage*, mais à passer à un niveau de compétence supérieur ?" [In what way […] did the English intellectuals, aristocracy, and bourgeois of the Middle Ages learn not only to make appropriate phrases in elementary French, at the level taught by the *Manières de langage*, but to go on to a level of superior competence?].

The apparent goal of these dialogues was to teach students to "parler et escrire doulz franceoys selon l'usage et la coustume de France" [speak and write beautiful French according to the custom of France] or, in another manuscript, "selon l'usage et la manere de Paris et Aurilians" [according to the way of Paris and Orleans] (*Manières*: 81). The present article will argue that the *Manières de langage* went beyond teaching elementary phrases, facilitating the instruction of more sophisticated elements of speech. Specifically, I wish to examine the teaching of humour production and comprehension in the dialogues, which is an area regarded as one of the most challenging to L2 learners. The idea that these dialogues could have been humorous in their medieval contexts has been mentioned by Critten (2015), who identifies a possible interest in humour:

> It is typical of the more developed *Manières* dialogues that alongside basic but perfectly serviceable expressions such as the lord's 'Quelle heure est il maintenant?' we find more sophisticated uses of French. Janyn's 's'il vous plaist, je sounge' is simple enough in itself, but the valet's deadpan humour indicates a thoughtful use of language [that] suggests an interest in the comic potential of French […] the pedagogic gesture can in itself provide the matter for a joke. (Critten 2015: 931)

This article seeks to explore this idea by conducting an in-depth inquiry into humour produced by incongruence, with an additional emphasis on how humour was constructed and understood.

By seeking to understand how the *Manières* were designed to address the challenge of teaching higher-level language behaviours, we can begin to answer questions pertaining to acquiring an interlingual pragmatic competence. An obvious concern for this article is the identification of humour. In identifying the types of humour demonstrated in the *Manières*, we can begin to understand the nature of the pragmatic competence promoted by the authors and teachers behind the texts. One way of addressing the identification issue is to operate on a diagnostic. Here, the diagnostic is incongruence, which is contingent on a contrast or opposition between what is said and what is meant, and which can function

as a diagnostic for humour; this is purported by Raskin (1985) in his Semantic Script Theory of Humour (henceforth SSTH). I will thus examine the concept of incongruence, a term that encompasses a range of discrete yet interrelated behaviours such as irony, sarcasm, banter, overstatement and understatement. I will furthermore demonstrate how incongruence was used and understood in the Middle Ages.

I will begin by examining some of the language used to describe incongruent behaviours in the dialogues. This will demonstrate both the multifaceted nature of the metapragmatic terminology found in the *Manières*, and what these behaviours will have looked like. I will then look at some episodes in the dialogues with regard to Raskin's SSTH, taking incongruence and contrast between scripts as a diagnostic for humour. This will allow for an examination of certain events in the texts as humorous, and thus allow us to reconsider the *Manières* as texts that use humour as a pedagogical device designed to cultivate an interlingual pragmatic competence. The argument that I seek to posit is that the authors of the *Manières* understood the pedagogical potential of humour, and may have purposefully worked with humorous moments in order to teach the more challenging elements of pragmatic competence.

2.1 Pragmatic competence

The teaching and learning of the social conventions of language use is a dynamic area within the study of contemporary language acquisition. Indeed, the ability to understand and produce the pragmatics of a language is at the highest levels of proficiency. Kasper and Roever (2005) outline the challenges that L2 learners face in this area:

> The challenge that learners face in acquiring the pragmatics of a second language is considerable because they have to learn (to paraphrase Austin, 1962) not only how to do things with target language words but also how communicative actions and the "words" that implement them are both responsive to and shape situations, activities, and social relationships. Following Leech (1983), these two intersecting domains of pragmatic competence are referred to as sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic competence. (Kasper and Roever 2005: 317)

"Competence" is a useful word when considering L2 pragmatics. Hymes (1974: 196-197) defines competence as a "socially constituted linguistics" that emphasises "social as well as referential meaning, and with language as part of communicative conduct and social action". Gallagher (2014: 14) expands this as "a competence which is keenly aware of the non-grammatical rules governing spoken interaction in a community: who can speak to whom, and in what way; when it is correct to speak, and when to be silent; and how the many social relationships of a community and a wider society are reflected and constituted in speech". In short, one can define competence as the ability to fully appreciate and construct acceptable sociopragmatic utterances. A cursory review of the current literature reveals several ways in which pragmatic competence is being examined: investigating the relationship between genre and pragmatic competence (Ifantidou 2011), exploring how speakers of English as a lingua franca improve their pragmatic competence by using discourse markers as expressions of (inter)subjectivity and connectivity (House 2013), and considering the role of basic interactional competence in studies of pragmatic competence (Kecskes et al. 2018). There remains much work to be done in applying these perspectives to historical contexts.

This study adds a historical element to the already established field of L2 pragmatics, originally conceptualised as the study of "the development and use of strategies for linguistic action by non-native speakers" (Kasper and Schmidt 1996: 150). Bardovi-Harlig (2010: 1) elaborated on this definition, stating that L2 pragmatics "bridges the gap between the system side of language and the use side" and then "brings the study of acquisition to this mix of structure and use". Culpeper et al. (2018: 1) add to this definition an emphasis on "*how* learners come to understand or comprehend meaning, as well as

how they negotiate and co-construct meaning". This latter definition places emphasis onto the learner's acquisition of interlingual pragmatic competence, which is a core consideration of L2 pragmatics.

Pragmatic comprehension and production are daunting tasks for the L2 learner, and no doubt this was also true for the learners using the *Manières* as their guide. Cohen (2017: 430) discusses these issues as belonging to the remit of "intercultural pragmatics", which examines "cultures in contact and the hybrid forms of pragmatics that result from this interaction". "Culture" in the case of the *Manières* is difficult to define, since the Anglo- and Francophone "cultures" in this case are not necessarily discrete. "French" in this period does not necessarily overlap with France, and indeed, French was a language used more often in some social contexts than in others, such as mercantile, or more socially elite contexts. Moreover, the *Manières* have a long period of use, spanning at least into the 16th century (if we take its inclusion in a 16th century manuscript, MS CUL Ii.6.17, as evidence). To reflect this, I consider the label of "interlingual pragmatics" more helpful for the current purpose of focusing on pragmatics arising from language contact.

2.2 Incongruence

I will now discuss the language of incongruence. Broadly speaking, incongruence entails a simultaneous integration of two contradictory ideas. Incongruent language behaviours exploit an apparent void between two reasoning processes: fast intuition and slow reason (Kahneman 2011). When both processes agree, reason validates intuition. Where they do not agree, reason provides the most logical answer, but only after intuition has supplied an illogical result. Metaphors exploit this incongruity, for instance, 'love is a battlefield' is absurd because 'love' and 'battlefield' are not equal when taken at face value. However, language users may recognise that 'battlefield' refers to both a literal site of conflict, and to a general sense of struggle. They would thus be using slower reason to resolve the apparent incongruity detected by intuition alone (see Glucksberg [1998] for further examples and reading). When the incongruity is resolved, this can produce a humorous effect (see Veale and Valitutti [2017]). Incongruence often manifests itself through wordplay, such as metaphor, jokes, and irony.

Defining terminology has proved elusive in studies of incongruent verbal behaviour. For example, much effort has been put into theorising and defining concepts such as irony, which is perhaps one of the broader terms to describe incongruent speech. Irony is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as "[t]he expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect; esp. (in earlier use) the use of approbatory language to imply condemnation or contempt". Simpson (2011; see also Barbe [1995: Ch. 3]) provides an overview of recent theoretical explanations of irony, ranging from relevant inappropriateness based on flouting conversational maxims, to irony as echoic mention, and implicit display. There is very little convergence of theories and many exceptions to the rule. Williams (2012; see also Barbe [1995: 9]) believes that characterising rather than defining irony is a more helpful and productive enterprise than "micro-theoretical" approaches. Indeed, in historical studies of irony or incongruence, a diachronic awareness is necessary, because "language change […] entails a change in the understanding of linguistic concepts, including the concept of irony, and thus renders many definitions dated" (Barbe 1995: 9). Kapogianni (2011: 51), characterising irony as a "non-unified phenomenon comprising different devices with different semantic/pragmatic cognitive characteristics", undertakes this enterprise of characterisation by providing three essential qualities of irony: duality and contrast, unexpectedness, or "inappropriateness", and speaker's act of evaluation (Kapogianni 2011: 54–55). However, Kapogianni (2011: 54) mentions that speakers "sometimes tend to loosen the use of the term 'irony' and extend it to refer to related terms such as 'sarcasm', 'banter', or even 'humour' in general". Thus, speakers often understand related incongruent phenomena as interchangeable. Moreover, many behaviours share features with the broadly-categorised 'irony'; for example, banter also relies on

contrast, inappropriateness, and evaluation. Hence, rather than speaking of irony exclusively, I will address a broader lexis of verbal incongruence.

Incongruence, and the speech acts that incorporate it, are particularly challenging for L2 learners. For instance, Kim (2014) notes that understanding sarcasm successfully in L2 presents a twofold challenge for learners: incongruity and context-dependency. Both these elements often impede a successful understanding. In the same vein, Bell and Attardo (2010) identify seven ways in which an L2 speaker may not be able to participate with 'competence' in humorous exchanges:

> (1) failure to process language at the locutionary level
>
> (2) failure to understand the meaning of words (including connotations)
>
> (3) failure to understand pragmatic force of utterances (including irony)
>
> (4) failure to recognize the humorous frame (a) false negative: miss a joke (b) false positive: see a joke where none was intended
>
> (5) failure to understand the incongruity of the joke
>
> (6) failure to appreciate the joke
>
> (7) failure to join in the joking (humor support/mode adoption). (Bell and Attardo 2010: 430)

Issues (3) and (5) directly pertain to incongruence and its associated speech acts, irony, sarcasm, jokes, and understatement. That the *Manières* may be consciously attempting to address pragmatic competence in the area of incongruence, identified here as a particular area of difficulty for L2 learners, would suggest that these were indeed highly sophisticated pedagogical texts.

For the purposes of this study, it is necessary to establish the presence of such behaviours in medieval times. Wordplay and incongruent speech behaviours were demonstrably valued in medieval culture (see (Bayless 1996; Wilcox 2000; and Males 2018). Incongruence was theorised widely by writers and rhetoricians, and practiced within literature at the levels of plot and genre. Regarding the incongruence between surface meaning and intention, *ironia* was a particular trope commented on by Cicero and the fourth-century grammarian Aelius Donatus, both classical thinkers drawn upon heavily throughout the Middle Ages. Cicero in *De Oratore* (II LVIII-LXII) includes "ex inversione verborum" [from the inverse of words; Attardo glosses this as "antiphrasis or irony" (1994: 27)] in his taxonomy of referential humour. Similarly, Aelius Donatus writes "Ironia est tropus per contrarium quod conatur ostendens" [irony is a trope expressing what it intends through its opposite] (in Keil 1864: 401).[3]

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[3] This comment by Donatus is significant due to his widespread influence on medieval language pedagogy. His *Ars Grammatica* became "the most successful textbook ever written" (Irvine: 1994, 58). By the fourteenth century, the *Barbarismus* section of the *Ars Grammatica* was one of 'the most common grammatical works in English lower schools' (Murphy 1967: 120). Indeed, in Middle English, the *donet* became shorthand for an elementary or introductory primer on grammar (MED < http://quod.lib.umich.edu/cgi/m/mec/med-idx?type=id&id=MED12376>). For Anglo Norman sources, we have the *Liber Donati* [The Book of Donatus], which shares exchanges with the 1415 *Manières*. Brian Merrileess and Beata Sitarz-Fitzpatrick (1993: 1) assert that "while the Anglo Norman text has […] only an indirect connection in form and content with the famous *Ars minor* of Donatus, but the title retains the common signification of an introductory work of grammar, one stamped with the authority of a great name".

Considerations of incongruity also extended outside the intellectual remit of rhetoricians. Beyer (2014: 147), who examines the roles of wit, irony and humour in high medieval historiography, a genre "which contains many scenes of oral communication […] testifying to the important role of humour in the interactions of the political elite", identifies "unexpected turnarounds" as a diagnostic for incongruity. Echoing discussions of pragmatic competence, Beyer (2014: 158) furthermore notes that "use of these rhetorical devices in speech demanded a high degree of learning and sensitivity to language and conversation"'.

In medieval literature, incongruence could be used for comedic effects, which can be seen in the *Pardoner's Tale*, in which Chaucer demonstrates an adept mastery of dramatic irony. The plot of this tale hinges on a basic confusion between spiritual and secular realities, which demonstrates the Pardoner's point that an obsession with physical gain blinds a person spiritually. At the beginning of the tale, three drunken revellers inquire after a dead man seen being carried to his grave. A servant in the tavern responds:

> He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres,
> […]
> Ther cam a privee theef men clepeth Deeth,
> That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
> And with his spere he smoot his herte atwo,
> And wente his wey withouten wordes mo.
> He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence.
> And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
> Me thynketh that it were necessarie
> For to be war of swich an adversarie.
> Beth redy for to meete hym everemoore;
> Thus taughte me my dame; I sey namoore. (*Pardoner's Tale*: 672-684)
>
>
> [He was, by God, an old friend of yours
> […]
> A stealthy thief named Death came,
> Who slays all the people of this land,
> And struck his heart with a spear,
> And went away without a word.
> He has slain a thousand this last pestilence.
> And, sir, before you meet him,
> I think it is necessary
> To be aware of such an enemy.
> Be always ready to meet him;
> My mother taught me this; I say no more.]

Whereas the meaning of this speech from the servant is clearly spiritual and eschatological, the revellers believe his description of Death to be literal, and decide to seek Death out and kill him, rather than being spiritually prepared to meet him. The oftentimes grotesque subversion of spiritual themes in the *Pardoner's Tale* is summarised at the end of the tale in this memorable image, when the Host tells the Pardoner:

> I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
> In stide of relikes or of seintuarie.
> Lat kutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;
> They shul be shryned in an hogges toord! (*Pardoner's Tale*: 952-955)

> [I wish I had your testicles in my hand
> Instead of relics or a container of relics
> [And] have them be cut off, I will help you carry them,
> [And] they shall be enshrined in a hog's turd]

There is a clear opposite here between the "high" spiritual domain of relics and the "low" grotesque bodily image of testicles enshrined in a turd, or in other words, an incongruity between eschatology and scatology. Furthermore, Chaucer explicitly states that the people all around are laughing (*Pardoner's Tale*: 961), demonstrating the humorous potential of incongruence.

There is also an interest in incongruity within francophone texts. For instance, at the beginning of Christine de Pizan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames* [Book of the City of Ladies], written c.1405, Lady Reason consoles Christine, who has pondered over the widespread existence of misogyny in the philosophical treatises, poetic works, and commentaries of her day:

> Et des pouettes dont tu parles, ne sces tu pas bien que ilz ont parlé en plusieurs choses en maniere de fable et se veullent aucunes foiz entendre au contraire de ce que leurs diz demonstrent ? Et les puet on prendre par la rigle de grammaire qui se nomme *antifrasis* qui s'entant, si comme tu sces, si comme on diroit tel est mauvais, c'est a dire que il est bon, et aussi a l'opposite. (in Cheney Curnow 1975: 625; translated by Blumenfeld-Kosinski 1997: 122)
>
> [And as for the poets of whom you speak, don't you know that they have spoken of many things in fables, and that many times they mean the opposite of what their texts seem to say? And one can approach them through the grammatical figure of *antiphrasis*, which means, as you know, that if someone says this is bad, it actually means it is good and vice versa.]

This roughly contemporary text to the *Manières* explicitly mentions incongruity (here, antiphrasis) as a rhetorical device. Incongruity at the level of genre was also common in Francophone texts of the period. Simpson (2011) provides a survey of incongruent genres:

> […] parodic revisionings and refashionings proliferate: mock 'wisdom literature' (e.g. parodic proverbs and pedagogical dialogues) and religious parodies (e.g. rewritings of the paternoster, or *Les Quinze Joies du mariage*, a parody of the meditation on the fifteen joys of the Virgin). [Another] striking example here is the mock testamentary tradition, notably represented in François Villon's *Testament*, a rich tapestry of comic crudity, whether drunks walking smack into lampposts, flatulence in bed or homosexual innuendo. In short, any genre or discourse in the Middle Ages has a comic double. (Simpson 2011: 112)

This demonstrates a pervasive fascination with incongruence (often played for humorous effect) in both anglophone and francophone literature.

It would not be unreasonable to suggest that humour had a place within medieval pedagogy. In fact, some medieval educators seem to have capitalised on the advantages of humour in their pedagogy. Münster-Swendsen (2014) notes that obscenity was common in the pedagogic medium, both for amusement but also to dramatise and explore power relationships between student and master. Aelfric de Bata, for example, used coarse scatological humour and crass humour: drunkenness, floggings, older monks accompanying younger boys to the toilet, violence and "a whole catalogue of Latin words for 'shit'" (Münster-Swendsen, 2014: 169-170). Indeed, humour was thought to help with the memorial process. De Bata, for instance, explains his pedagogical method thus:

> Ergo, sicut in hac sententia didicistis, pueri mei, et legistis in multis locis, iocus cum sapientiae loquelis et uerbis inmixtus est et sepe coniunctus. Ideo autem hoc constitui et meatim disposui

> sermonem hunc uobis iuuenibus, sciens scilicet quosque pueros iugiter suatim loquentes adinuicem ludicra uerba sepius quam honorabilia et sapientiae apta, quia aetas talium semper trahit ad inrationabilem sermonem et ad frequens iocum et ad garrulitatem indecentem illorum. (*Aelfric de Bata Colloquy 29*, translated by Irina Dumitrescu 2011: 71)

> [So, as you learned in this speech, my boys, and as you've read in many places, joking is often mingled and joined with language and words of wisdom. This is why I arranged and ordered this speech in my own way for you boys. I know, of course, that boys frequently say playful words to one another rather than words that are honorable or wise. For their age always draws them to their unreasonable talk and frequent joking and improper chattering.]

Indeed, it is interesting to note that there have been multiple studies in various disciplines of the present day to suggest that humour has a positive effect on memory, which is particularly beneficial to the pedagogical experience.

The positive effect of humour (and incongruity) on memory is well-attested. Goel and Dolan (2001) conducted a study wherein participants underwent an fMRI scan while listening to semantic and phonological jokes (puns). The findings "suggest that […] a common component of humor is expressed in activity in medial ventral prefrontal cortex, a region involved in reward processing" (Goel and Dolan 2001: 237). The results thus intimately link humour to goal-orientated processing (both manifesting in the medial ventral prefrontal cortex), which is central to language learning contexts. This is further elaborated by Wise (2004: 483), who states that "dopamine release in a broader range of structures is implicated in the 'stamping-in' of memory that attaches motivational importance to otherwise neutral environmental stimuli". Furthermore, there have been several classroom-based studies that suggest the positive impact of humour on memory (for an overview, consult Banas et al. 2010). Examples of such studies include Garner (2006), who found that inserting humorous anecdotes at regular points in a statistics lecture produced a positive effect on content retention. Further overviews on what has been dubbed the "humour effect" may be found in Strick et. al (2010) and Bell (2012). Both overviews draw on a number of quantitative and qualitative studies to support the notion that humorous and unusual materials are more easily recalled than nonhumorous and common materials. Overall, there is evidence to suggest both that humorous material tends to be recalled at higher rates than non-humorous material, and that this was understood by some educators in the Middle Ages.

3 The metapragmatic terminology of incongruence

The 1399 dialogues provide a good place to start thinking about the metapragmatic terminology for incongruent language. There are two lists of insults in MS Oxford All Souls 182, introduced as "autre manier de language a parler des bourdeus et de trufes et tensons" [another way to speak of jokes, tricks, and arguments], the first of which I reproduce here:

> Mauvaise ribaud, vous mentez.
>
> Alez, ribaud, vous pendre.
>
> Ribaud, vous estez digne d'estre perdu.
>
> Alez decy, senglent filz de putaigne.
>
> Certez, pailard, vous ne eschiverez jamais.
>
> Garçon, vous le achetrez.
>
> Ribaud, vous baserez mon cuel.
>
> Va, ribaud, le diable vous confonde.

Pailard, je serrey bien vengé de vous. (*Manières*: 54-55):

[Evil scoundrel, you're lying,

Go away, scoundrel, hang yourself.

Scoundrel, you're damned.

Go away, bloody son of a whore.

Certainly, rogue, you're not going to get away.

Boy, you'll pay for that.

Scoundrel, kiss my arse.

Go, scoundrel, the devil confound you.

Rogue, I will be avenged.]

The metalinguistic terminology that accompanies these insults, *bordeus*, *trufes* and *tensons*, reveals a broad application for these utterances beyond mere impoliteness. The English cognate of *bourdeus*, for example, appears in the definition of "irony" in *The Dictionary of Sir Thomas Elyot* (c.1538; accessed on the *Lexicons of Early Modern English* database):

Ironia, is a fygure in speakynge, whanne a man dissemblyth in speche that whyche he thynketh not: as in scoffyng or bourdyng, callynge that fayre, whyche is fowle in dede, that good, whiche is yl, that eloquent, which is barbarous.

To find "bourdyng" related to incongruence so explicitly is clearly significant for the speech acts discussed in this article, however, this word also appears in Middle English earlier than this attestation, in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. The following example reveals the associated gameplay that comes with the term, when Lady Bertilak and Sir Gawain engage in this banterous exchange:

God moroun, Sir Gawayn,' sayde þat gay lady,

'Ȝe ar a sleper vnslyȝe, þat mon may slyde hider;

Now ar ȝe tan as-tyt! Bot true vus may schape,

I schal bynde yow in your bedde, þat be ȝe trayst':

Al *laȝande* þe lady lanced þo *bourdez*.

'Goud moroun, gay,' quoþ Gawayn þe blyþe,

'Me schal worþe at your wille, and þat me wel lykez,

For I ȝelde me ȝederly, and ȝeȝe after grace,

And þat is þe best, be my dome, for me byhouez nede':

And þus he *bourded* aȝayn with mony a blyþe *laȝter*. (edited by Tolkien and Gordon 1967: 34)

['Good morning, Sir Gawain' said that gay lady,

'You are such a deep sleeper that anyone can slip in here;

Now you are quite arrested! But we may form a truce,

I will bind you to your bed, be sure of that':

And, *laughing*, the lady launched her *jests*.

'Good morning, gay lady', said Gawain blithely,

'I will work to your will, and that pleases me,

for I yield completely, and yearn for grace,

And that is best, I believe, for I'm obliged by need'

And thus he *jested* again with many a blithe *laugh*.]

In Middle English we can see that "bourdyng" is a term associated with gameplay, wit, and humour. This may have been true for an Anglophone learner, and could guide their interpretation of the insults in the 1399 *Manières*. Indeed, the *Anglo Norman Dictionary* (*AND*) similarly defines this word as "joke". There is thus a clear ludic application of the 1399 insults, identified by the word *bourdeus*.

The metapragmatic label *trufes* also indicates a possible ludic application of the insults, although it also indicates a broader sense of falsehood not necessarily related to humour. A search for *trufes* on the *Lexicons of Early Modern English (LEME)* database returns "[b]ourde or iape wt one in sporte" from John Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement de la Langue Francoyse* (1530).

This dictionary evidence, which sheds light on metalinguistic attitudes, reveals a close semantic link with *bourd* and *trufle* both in English and in French. Both words can convey a ludic or socially inappropriate speech act. However, *trufle* can also apply to less playful linguistic behaviours. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), which defines the English "trifle" as "a false or idle tale, told […] to deceive, cheat, or befool, [or] to divert or amuse", gives earlier examples of its use in Middle English:

(1) a. *Þeos   ant   oðre   trufles   þet   he   bitrufleð   monie   men   mide*

       this   and   other   trifles   that   he   tricked   many   men   with

      'With this and many other trifles, he tricked many men'

(*Ancrene Riwle*: 46)

    b. *Þys   yche   tale   ys   no   tryfyl,   For   hyt   ys   wryte   yn   þe   bybyl*

      this   very   take   is   no   trifle   for   it   is   written   in   the   Bible

      'This very tale is no trifle for it is written in the Bible'

(*Handlyng Synne*: 5031)

From this collected evidence, we can argue that the term *trufle* encompasses the idea of falsehood or lying, both in playful and non-playful modes. This indicates that the phrases from the 1399 *Manières* may themselves represent both playful and serious falsehoods.

The case of *tensons* is different because it represents a more serious and potentially hostile act. Again, we may find an English definition of this in John Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement de la Langue*

Francoyse (1530), "Chidyng altercation, noise". An OED query for "tencion" returns an attestation from Caxton's translation of Raoul Le Fèvre's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*:

(2)   *A grete strif or tenchon that is fallen betwene them*

        'A great strife or tension that has fallen between them'

                    (*Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye*, 260)

What we have is a lexical field that attests to the multiple applications of the following invectives of the 1399 *Manières*. On the one hand, they can be used as genuine insults (*tensons,* and perhaps *trufes*), on the other hand, they can be used in a ludic manner (as *bourdeus* or *trufes*). There is thus potential for incongruity. This can be most succinctly explained via Geoffrey Leech's Banter Principle, which is a surface-level impoliteness that conveys a "politeness", or, a "relationship-affirming character" as defined by Kotthoff (1996: 299), thus rejecting the equation of solidarity with politeness. Leech (1983, 144) defines this as a "mock impoliteness" involving "underpoliteness" that has the outcome of "establishing or maintaining a bond of familiarity". This notion of 'mock impoliteness' is discussed extensively by Jonathan Culpeper (1996, 2005), who describes it as "impoliteness that remains on the surface, since it is understood that it is not intended to cause offence" which "reflects and fosters social intimacy" (1996: 352). Furthermore, Culpeper (2011: 215) outlines the multiple purposes of mock impoliteness, including reinforcing solidarity, cloaked coercion, and exploitative entertainment. Thus, mock impoliteness or 'banter' should be disentangled from the equation with 'politeness', since there appears to be a gradation of applications within (im)politeness. Haugh and Bousfield (2012: 1102) use the term 'non-impolite' to refer to an "allowable offence" that is evaluated as "neither polite nor impolite". Of course, we cannot in this instance detect whether something is evaluated as (im)polite, however, this makes broad terms such as "non-impolite" useful, especially given that the metapragmatic terminology supports a broad application for these words. Non-impoliteness is a possible interpretation for the insults found in the *Manières*, if we take the metalinguistic terminology of *bourdeus*, *trufes* and *tensons* as evidence. Leech's Banter Principle operates as follows:

(i) You are a fine friend (face-value, i.e. what is said)
(ii) By which I mean you are *not* a fine friend. (Irony Principle)
(iii) But actually, you *are* my friend, and to show it, I am being impolite to you. (Banter Principle).
                    (Leech 1983: 145)

To adapt this as one possible reading for the invectives found in the *Manières*:

(i) *Ribaud, vous baserez mon cuel* [Scoundrel, kiss my arse]

(ii) By which I mean you are not a scoundrel and you really shouldn't kiss my arse!

(iii) Actually, you are my friend, and to show it, I am acting apparent impoliteness towards you

Theorised this way, it is possible to argue that instructing the principles of banter (or, how insulting phrases can also be used to affirm relationships) was an aim of this section of the *Manières*. This would be a useful lesson in pragmatic competence, which demonstrates the use of an arguably more difficult conversational behaviour. Of course, in some utterances, the boundaries between hurtful ridicule and banter are not always so salient, and there can be slippage between categories. Culpeper (1996: 352-353) states that banter reflects and generates social intimacy only in contexts where the content of the

insult is known to be untrue. If the speaker or the addressee perceives truth in the utterance, this causes the boundaries between insult and banter to collapse, and often results in offence. Indeed, Mills (2003: 124) argues that in some instances "banter or mock impoliteness might allow someone to utter something closer to their true feelings in an exaggerated form at the same time as posing it in a manner where it will be interpreted on the surface at least as non-serious". So, while Leech's principles may help us identify humour, wordplay, and incongruence in the *Manières*, it is important to bear this qualification in mind.

A similarly interesting incongruent behaviour is signified in the 1396 *Manières* by the term *mokkez* [mocking]. "Mocking" is an identified metalinguistic term associated with irony (see Williams [2012]), and is thus an evaluative incongruence (i.e. includes speaker's judgement on a given state of affairs). Interestingly, this association also appears in Old French, since the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* supplies this as the definition of irony: "raillerie qui consiste à dire le contraire de ce que l'on veut laisser entendre, ironie; Moquerie, dénigrement" [mockery which consists in saying the opposite of what one wants to suggest, irony; Mockery, denigration]. The exchange wherein this occurs is when an unidentified speaker meets a *malade* [a sick man], who explains that his horse struck him on the leg so hard that 'il en est tout enfleez et auxi le peel rumpuz' [it is all enflamed and the skin is broken]. Indeed, he elaborates on his condition in rather excessive terms:

> il puit plus vilainement qu'un fimers purriz tout plain de caroyne et de merde et de toutz autres ordurez et chosez puantz. Et pur ce je pense bien que je ne vivray gairs sinon que j'en ay le plus tost remedie. (*Manières*: 30)

> [It stinks worse than a rotten dungheap full of dead flesh and shit and of all other rubbish and smelly things. So because of this I really think that I won't live long if I don't quickly get a cure.]

Upon hearing this, the other man tells the *malade* the story of Job, encouraging him to endure his trials while praising and thanking God. To this the *malade* responds):

> Hé, moun tresdoulx amy, purquoy ne fustez vous mye fait un frere mendivant ou un curee d'une esglise ou autrement un chapelein parochiel? Veraiment, il est grant damage que vous n'estez mye fait un clerk, quar vous eussez donques esté un soverain prechour. (*Manières*: 31

> [Hey, my good friend, why were you never made a mendicant friar or a curate of a church, or otherwise a parochial chaplain? Truly, it's a great shame that you were never made a clerk, since you would have made an outstanding preacher]

The man responds to this utterance thus:

> Hé, mon amy, vous savez tresbien flatere, quar je sçay bien ore que vous *mokkez* de moy. (*Manières*: 31)

> [Hey, my friend, you know very well how to flatter, because I now know that you're *mocking* me]

Although mockery (a related term for irony) is not necessarily intended by the *malade*, the "preacher" has made the interpretation of irony. The utterance "vous eussez donques esté un soverain prechour" [you would have made an outstanding preacher], if taken as ironic, could conform to Kapogianni's (2011) broad characterisations of duality and contrast, and the speaker's act of negative evaluation, in the guise of praise (Kapogianni 2011: 54–5). The enumeration that precedes this sentence potentially

increases the ironic (or sarcastic) effect of this evaluation. The contrast can be explained by Leech's Irony Principle, which states that in order to cause offence one must "do so in a way which doesn't overtly conflict with the Politeness Principle, but allows the hearer to arrive at the offensive point of your remark indirectly, by way of implicature" (Leech, 1983:82). This example would operate thus:

(i)   You would have made an outstanding preacher
(ii)   By which I mean you would *not* have made an outstanding preacher

It is important to remember that the utterance could contain elements of both (i) and (ii): for example, the speaker may wish the addressee to understand (i), when he wishes to covertly express (ii); thus, the utterance walks a line between flattery and insult. If, hypothetically, the speaker intends (ii), this is an example of speaker evaluation that consists of an "untrue" statement (that is, the opposite of what one means). Another way of framing this is "overpoliteness" as a means to convey "underpoliteness". The above example could therefore show both the potential opposition of the utterance and also the act of speaker evaluation (i.e. "you would *not* have made an outstanding preacher"). This would render the perlocutionary interpretation of irony as valid. If, however, the speaker meant to convey (i), the addressee's interpretation of "mocking" is contingent on a perception of untruthfulness in the speaker's utterance (regardless of intent). However, one could argue that this is in fact a performative deflection of a genuine compliment, wherein the addressee pretends to detect malicious intent that was never there. In other words, meaning (ii) is the addressee's fabrication.[4] In the context of the dialogues' didactic impetus, even if there is no ironic intention (we can never know), the fact remains that the possibility has been introduced to the learner using the dialogues. The possible didactic points may have been that the *malade*'s utterance passed for an incongruent speech act designed to either flatter or mock; or, that deflection of praise was a desirable behaviour to emulate. This episode, however, identifies itself as a possible site of incongruity, that moreover demonstrates the communal nature of making meaning.

There is also a potential situational irony in this episode that is contingent on devotional attitudes. Whereas piety and devotion may have been acceptable response to sickness, and perhaps thought to cure, the *malade* could be using irony in order to make an evaluation on the other man's response to his illness. The explicit and implicit meaning could operate as follows:

(i)   You would have made an outstanding preacher
(ii)   But this is doing nothing to heal my leg

Indeed, no healing takes place in the text; the two interlocutors simply part ways. This interpretation of the "mocking" episode presents a humorous opposition between a spiritual ideal and a more imminent reality (cf. above discussion on the entertaining incongruence between spiritual and secular scripts in Chaucer's *Pardoner's Tale*). Indeed, such an opposition leads into my subsequent discussion of how certain moments in the *Manières* relate to SSTH.

4 SSTH at work in the *Manières*

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[4] Further complicating matters, if this latter outcome was anticipated by the speaker, this would theoretically allow him to insult his addressee while maintaining face by pretending to only have intended meaning (i).

The main premise of Raskin's SSTH is that a text (broadly defined: this can be a joke, an image, or a piece of literature) can be fully or partly compatible with two opposite scripts (1985, 99). Raskin defines a "script" as a "large chunk of semantic information surrounding the word or evoked by it […] internalised by the native speaker" (1985: 81: see also Attardo [2010: ch.6]). There are furthermore differing types of opposition according to SSTH: actual vs. non-actual; expected vs. unexpected; and plausible vs. implausible (Raskin 1985: 107-110). A popular figure of the Middle Ages, Reynard the Fox (as seen in BL Royal MS 10 E IV, fol. 49v) preaching to the birds while disguised as a priest, demonstrates how this operates in a medieval context. This image of Reynard preaching to the birds (with the intention of eating them) evokes two main oppositional scripts (PREACHER and FOX), which themselves contain oppositional "sub-scripts".

PREACHER	FOX
Human	Animal
Benevolent	Malevolent
Spiritual good	Earthly misdeeds
Leads flock to eternal life	Eats the flock, leading to death

Raskin posits that it is this opposition that evokes humour. I will discuss three aspects of the dialogues that can be related to SSTH: the inadvertently offensive *fabliau* told to the lady of the hostel; the goodnight formulae that are prescribed "se vous vuilez *trumper* ascun" [If you want to *make a fool of* somebody]; and the possible humour arising from the incongruity between the learner using these dialogues and the character they perform.

The *fabliau* (pages 13-16) is present in four of the six manuscripts containing the 1396 *Manières*. It is noteworthy that this scene directly precedes the goodnight formulae, which invites the idea that this type of incongruent and oppositional humour may have been a pedagogical focus for this section of the *Manières*. I argue that the *fabliau* operates on situational incongruences via oppositional scripts. In this tale a lady is propositioned for sex by her husband's amorous squire. She accepts, concocting a plan with the squire. When she and the husband go to bed, she tells him about the squire, and instructs the husband to go outside dressed as her and wait for the squire in order to catch him. But unfortunately for her husband, she has also instructed the squire to wait for the husband with a stick, and beat him up, feigning to mistake the cross-dressing husband for the wife, and protecting her virtue. The husband, having been brutally beaten is satisfied that his wife will never be unfaithful. The wife and the squire then have sex.

The narrative establishes a courtly couple: the wife is "une dame bone, gentele et sage" [a good woman, gentle and wise], whereas the husband is a "mult bon chivaler et vaillant" [very good and valiant knight] (*Manières*: 13). This initial portrayal corresponds to Raskin's definition of a script as a recognisable schema, the entirety of which is implied by a certain word or concept. In other words, an expectation is established by the use of courtly language that the couple will act in a courtly manner. For this reason, I call this script COURTLY EXPECTATION. This COURTLY EXPECTATION script, however, clashes with the second script, which sees the subsequent actions of the characters fulfilling a different script, that of a fabliau. The second script is thus labelled UNCOURTLY OUTCOME. Within these two scripts there are different oppositions at play:

COURTLY EXPECTATION	UNCOURTLY OUTCOME
Chivaler husband	Dresses as his wife and is beaten
Intends to catch squire	Is caught and beaten by squire
Wife appears innocent	She is in fact guilty

We can see in this fabliau that expectations are established and then thwarted by the narrative. Although this may prove mirthful to the audience reading this in the dialogues, the character being told this tale, the lady of the hostel, is far from amused (which is itself amusing). The tale is set up by the storyteller as the "plus meilour counte que j'oy unques mais jour de ma vie" [the very best tale I have ever heard in my life] (*Manières*: 13) and upon finishing the narrative, states that (for the most part) all the women in the world are "plains de maveistee et tresone" [full of evil and treachery] (*Manières*: 16). The man, after finishing his tale, immediately turns to the woman asking how she enjoyed this "tresnoble counte" [very noble tale]. She responds by calling this the "pesme counte que j'oy unques mez dez femmez" [the worst tale that I have ever heard told of women] (*Manières*: 16). Evidently this is a failed attempt at impressing the lady, by telling her a story in which the moral is to avoid women.

The context for the telling of this tale is thus an incongruent situation based upon intention versus effect:

INTENTION	OUTCOME
Adept performance	Inept performance (through choice of text)
Best tale	Worst tale
Seduce woman (for telling the tale)	She is instead offended
Avoid women (moral of the story)	Woman now avoids man

Using SSTH to understand this scenario allows for the possibility to view this section of the dialogues as humorous. We can also do this with the goodnight formulae that follow this episode, which can similarly be considered as operating on oppositional humour. The goodnight formulae can be situationally thought of as expected vs. unexpected (that is, a void between the "normal, expected state of affairs, and the abnormal, unexpected state of affairs" (Raskin 1985: 111) because the expected situation is a sincere "goodnight", and the unexpected outcome is the surprise twist:

> Et se vous vuilez trumper ascun, vous dirrez ainsi :
>
> > Dieu vous doint bone nut et bon repos
> > Et beau lit et vous dehors.
> >
> > Dieu vous doint bone noet et auxi bon repos,
> > Que vous n'aiez maishuy le cuil clos.
>
> [And if you want to make a fool of somebody, you will say thus:
>
> > God give you good night and good rest
> > And a beautiful bed, with you outside.
> >
> > God give you good night and good rest
> > May you never have a closed arse.]

(*Manières*: 16-17)

Does the phrase "God give you good night and good rest" contain conventions indicative of a goodnight salutation script? Attestations from the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* testify to an established "goodnight" script containing these elements:

(3)   a.   A   Dieu,   qui   bonne   nuit   vous   doint
             To   God,   who   good   night   you   give-SBJV
                    '(I commend you) to God, who gives you good night'
                             (*Miracle de Theodore*, 99)

       b.   que   bonne   nuit   lui   doint   Dieux
             That- good   night him-   give-   God
             REL   DAT   SBJV
                    'May God give him good night'
                    (Le livre de trois vertus, 97)

However, contemporary evidence for these conventions in English is scarce. A search for the "God give you good night" phrase does not return positive results from the *Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse*.[5] As for the *Middle English Dictionary*, the only goodnight formula that is provided is one attestation from Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*:

(4)   *Have now good nyght, I may no lenger wake.*

       (*Troilus and Criseyde*, 3.341)

One could argue that we simply do not have the evidence for this kind of greeting in Middle English, but that is not to say that it did not exist in the Middle Ages alongside Anglo Norman. But although it is a possibility, one cannot argue on the basis of lack of such evidence. We can more concretely argue for "God give you good night" being indicative of a recognisable goodnight script in medieval French, that may have entered into English during the Early Modern period. The *trumper* [tricking] element is enacted in the reversal of this "goodnight" script, which reflects Beyer's (2014) discussion of mirth involving the collapse of expectations. Thus, in these bedtime jokes from the *Manières*, the opposition at play is a reversal of an expectation invited by the conventions of the "goodnight" script. This is reversed by a "twist" follow up in each case, but these work on different oppositions, outlined below:

   (i) "I wish you have a comfy bed" > "I wish you outside of that bed (therefore not comfy)"

   (ii) "I wish you good night" > "I wish you have an open arse"

Example (i) is a straightforward actual vs. nonactual opposition, which is a void between the actual situation or setting for the joke (I wish you be comfy), and the non-actual situation (I wish you aren't comfy). The second joke, (ii), does not contain readily-identifiable opposition, since it does not operate

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[5] We do, however, find the goodnight conventions in the *Manières* occurring in Early Modern English. In the *Corpus of English Dialogues*, the query <g+d n+ght*> (covering spelling variations for *good* and *night*) for the period 1560-1599 returns 6 hits in 4 different texts. 2 of these hits share the 'god give you good night' phrase seen in the *Manières*: Claude Desainliens's *Schoolemaister* (1573) and Jaques Bellot's *Familiar Dialogues* (1586). Not only does this reflect the languages of the *Manières*, but as pedagogical dialogues, they seek to reproduce pragmatically "competent" speech.

on a binary. The latter half of the utterance could perhaps be itself an instance of verbal irony that operates as follows:

> (ii) "I wish you have an open arse"

> (iii) by which I mean I hope you do not have an open arse (because that would stink and be unpleasant for me)

In a bed-sharing situation (a common practice for travellers at an inn), one can see why the speaker would desire that their bedfellow keep a shut anus! Indeed, the wish for an open anus is very peculiar indeed. That the two bedtime jokes have different operations of incongruent humour may not be accidental. The aim here could be to demonstrate two different methods to *trumper auscun* [trick somebody]: incongruence elicited by binary script opposition, and incongruence arising from a more surreal (and bawdy) ironic strategy.

I will now examine the incongruence arising from the performance of the dialogues. The focus here is on the humour that occurs when the speakers read the dialogues aloud and the characters that they perform occupy different or oppositional social scripts. An example of situational incongruence would be the performance of "doulx franceys" by a speaker who had limited capability in the language. Consider this dialogue with a French traveller:

> -En que pais fustez vous nee, beau sir, se vous pleast?

> -Veraiment, en le roialme de France.

> - Je vous en croi bien. Vous parlez bien et graciousement doulx franceys, et pur ce il me fait grant bien et esbatement au coer de parler ovesque vous de vostre beal langage, quar est le plus gracious parler que soit en monde et de toutz gentz meulx preisés et amee que nulle autre. (*Manières*: 32)

> [In which country were you born, sir, if you please?

> Truly, in the kingdom of France.

> I really believe you. You speak well and graciously sweet French, and because of this it does me much good and gives me joy in my heart to speak with you in your beautiful language, since it is the most gracious speech that there is in the world and is the most prized and loved by all people, like no other.]

The person reading the role of the Frenchman who speaks "bien et graciousement doulx franceys" invites mirth or mockery if, in fact, they do not speak their French part well at all. This humorous effect is produced by the incongruity between an idealised adept speaker of French and an inept performer of this role. The humorous effect would be intensified by the lengthy and elaborate response of the traveller who praises the virtue of French. Another instance of situational incongruence would be asking a young man to read the role of a prostitute (of which there are a couple in the *Manières*). This may have produced a humorous effect.

As well as producing mirth in the pedagogical environment, incongruent performances could also have manifested in very positive ways for the learner. For instance, a young boy reading the part of a character of a higher social status would constitute as an aspirational performance. Regarding the use of the dialogic form in the early modern period, Sullivan (2008) imagines these helping students to test identities and grow into a role that they can occupy in adulthood. In this sense, performance reflects very real ambition. Certainly, there is a level of aspirational performance at play in the *Manières*. For instance, Critten (2015: 942) writes that instances wherein the student performs the lord in the 1396

Manières mean that the student "practises not only the French names of lordly appurtenances, he also learns the way in which aristocratic identity constructs itself through the calling up of things, and he learns the breathless, demanding tones in which such objects are to be summoned into his presence". Indeed, this links the performance of identity with the practice of a "correct" tone and register, which would fall into the remit of cultivating a pragmatic competence for L2 learners.

What is the evidence that these dialogues might have been performed aloud? There is both internal textual evidence and contextual evidence. Regarding evidence for performance within the classroom setting, Orme's study on medieval schools provides a wealth of information on their organisation and teaching practice. Orme (2006) states that pedagogical practice within the grammar schools comprised memorisation (either dictated by the master or read aloud by pupils) and questions and answers, which was "the format used by Donatus and his imitators, which suggests that masters would have asked a question in class and trained the pupils to make the appropriate response" (2006: 147). Orme characterises the medieval classroom as a place of "plenty of oral interchange" (2006: 148). Furthermore, while stating that French pedagogy was not unified in its techniques, Critten (2018b) has outlined the likely importance of dictation and rote learning in the classrooms of the *Manières*. It is difficult to identify precisely how these texts would have been used (a book may have been passed between learners, or a teacher may have read to a room from his book)[6], but it is compelling to imagine that students may have been asked comprehension questions of their dialogues after performing them or having heard them being performed. In terms of evidence yielded by the *Manières*, the marks of orality (such as multiple exclamations of "que dea" and "hé") are an indicator that the texts would have been performed aloud. On a material level, the portable dimensions of some of the *Manières* manuscripts make it possible that these dialogues may have been passed around in a classroom setting, in order to be read aloud (in a manner similar to the travellers' modern phrasebook). As previously mentioned, the manuscripts also testify to a long period of use, and thus it is not beyond expectation that the dialogues had a period of use spanning at least a century, and that different methods of physical engagement were used in the learning process. One can therefore expect, from this textual and material evidence, that reading aloud was a part of the learning process in at least some instances. Furthermore, we have the *publicité pro domo* (Kristol's term) from the 1415 *Manières*, wherein a young boy recites his lessons from the hostel of William Kingsmill to an unidentified knight in order to secure an apprenticeship. As he recites his *nominalia* (which are largely based on the earlier *Tretiz* of Walter of Bibbesworth), the boy utters the words:

> *Auxi, beal fyz*, je toy enseigne de comune langage et d'autre maner de parlance (*Manières*: 78)
>
> > [*Also, good lad*, I will teach you the common language and another way of speaking. Emphasis my own.]

The address term "beal fyz" is of particular interest here. This utterance also appears in MS BL Additional 17716 ("bele fitz"), but the address term is changed in MS Oxford Bodleian Lat. Misc. e. 93 to "beal sire". Not only does the boy inhabit the role of his teacher (presumably Kingsmill), but he replicates a verbal exchange between master and student. The teachers of later traditions, such as the Tudor *vulgaria*, were similarly interested in depicting students in the process of learning and reciting.

It would seem that knowing how to assume different roles and identities was a helpful skill to learn, since it performed very real functions and reaped tangible rewards. For example, role-play serves the purpose of obtaining love and affection in the *Manières* in an episode in MS BL Harley 3988, wherein we encounter a traveller soliciting the services of a prostitute. However, this is enacted in a striking way that explicitly demonstrates the potential advantages of role-play. The man sings the prostitute a song, "pour avoir son amour et sa pucellage" [in order to have her love and her womanhood] (*Manières*: 41). This leads to a section wherein the man role-plays a marriage with the prostitute:

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[6] This latter theory would have made the material of the dialogues contingent on the capabilities of the teacher.

> M'amie, je vous prenne icy a ma compaigne, et sur ce je vous affiance.
>
> [My love, I take you here as my wife, and by this I marry you]

This interaction is successful, but to the modern reader it may feel disingenuous in the context of a business transaction. This could be an attempt to simultaneously address matters of interest to young men on the road, while also demonstrating the amenability of women to a man who is able to perform the perfect lover. This marriage is clearly not a binding contract, since only a short while later does the knight depart and pay for the prostitute's services:

> Doncques le signeur se monte a chival et baise la fillete sa compaigne et li baille trent francs a paier pour ses despens (*Manières* : 44)
>
> [Then the lord mounts his horse and kisses the prostitute, his companion, and hands over 30 francs to pay for her expenses]

Perhaps this is an aspirational account of how being able to play the correct role, and doing so well, brings material benefits. This places emphasis on the ability to perform different roles, which would certainly be within the remit of pragmatic competence. The possible function of performance incongruence is thus perhaps a hands-on experience of this ability that prefigures the ambitious performance of lordship in the early modern *vulgaria*. Not only do we see a practicing of aspirational desires, but also a potentially more developed understanding of dialect and "class" registers, grounded in first-hand performance. This returns us to the task of cultivating sociopragmatic competence: learning how to adopt and perform different roles (through incongruent performance) may have been a tool used to teach language learners how to proficiently adapt to different conversational situations. This was a skill presumably valued in both L1 and L2.

5 Conclusion

What could be the potential function of the incongruity detected by the metapragmatic language and instances of SSTH in the dialogues? One possible role for incongruence incorporating humour is to check that the students are paying attention or, indeed, whether they understand what is going on. This is because a certain level of attention would be needed to follow the incongruous sequence of events, or the opposing scripts at play within certain scenarios (such as the offensive *fabliau*). The humour present in many of the exchanges may have facilitated better recall; a conclusion reached to by educators throughout the Middle Ages, from Aelfric De Bata to Erasmus, who extolled the virtues of Plautus and Terence in the education of boys, particularly because "[T]he essence of comedy is portrayal of character, but it leaves an impression even on children and the uneducated; here, too, an immense amount of moral teaching is imparted by means of humour" (in Sowards 1985: 336). Incidentally, this relationship between humour and memory is supported by present-day psychological and neuroscientific study.

Understanding and replicating incongruence in L2 are among the hardest elements of pragmatic competence. The *Manières* aimed to cultivate this competence by displaying (and facilitating practice of) these sophisticated conversational behaviours. For the *Manières*, this involved teaching students what it tangibly meant to *mokker*, to *bourder* and *trufler*, or to *trumper*, by first labelling the speech act before demonstrating its use in the following dialogue. It is thus possible that the authors of the *Manières* understood the pedagogical potential of humour, and the benefits of producing incongruent and humorous behaviours, thus actively incorporating this into their teaching materials. It is furthermore imaginable that this humour was detected by the students over the course of their learning, and that this helped them to build up pragmatic competence not only because it helped them understand jokes in L2, but also because it kept them engaged and interested learners.

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